Convergence, which is considering the proposed draft of the Communication Convergence Bill, is awaited.

The draft of the Bill *inter alia* envisages the establishment of a single autonomous and statutory body to be known as the Communications Commission of India to regulate the carriage and content of communications (including telecommunications, broadcasting and multimedia). As per the proposals contained in the draft Bill, the Commission would *inter alia* be empowered to issue licences, determine licence fees and tariffs for licensed services, allot spectrum, facilitate competition, protect consumer interests, etc.

Rectification of Bijanbari Exchanges, Darjeeling

2606. SHRI DAWA LAMA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that 60 Exchanges of Bijanbari, Darjeeling can hardly by accessed from outside; and

(b) if so, the action proposed to be taken for getting the defects rectified permanently?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) Sir, there is only one Exchange working at present with Level "60" at Bijanbari, Darjeeling. Due to certain problem in the Exchange/Transmission media, the accessibility of this Exchange from outside is affected.

(b) In order to overcome this problem, the work of setting up 1000 Lines CDOT Exchange at Bijanbari, Darjeeling along with STD connectivity by Digital Microwave Link to Darjeeling is under progress and is likely to be completed by 31.03.2001, subject to availability of Electrical power, to ensure smooth access in both ways.

Appointment of Chief Post Master General for Manipur Nagaland and Mizoram

2607. SHRI W. ANGOU SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any plan to keep a Chief Post Master General for Manipur, Nagaland and Mizoram separate from Shillong;

(b) if so, by when and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken to provide vehicles to Imphal Post Master General's Office for utilisation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) No decision has been taken in this regard.

(b) Does not arise in view of reply to part (a).

(c) There is no office of Post Master General in Imphal.

Decision to terminate VSNL's monopoly over ILD services

2608. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has decided to review competition in ILD services in April, 2004 in WTO;

(b) if so, why Government have decided to terminate VSNL's monopoly over ILD services in 2002 itself while it had already started discussing disinvestment of its equity in the company;

(c) whether this decision had any impact on the value of shares of the company in the market; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) India had committed to WTO to review the opening up of ILD services to competition in the year 2004.

(b) The objectives set forth in the National Telecom Policy of 1994 includes private investment and participation to bridge the resource gap. Thus, the Government committed itself to deregulate the Telecom sector in a phased manner. Government further decided to discontinue VSNL's monopoly on international voice services by 31.3.2002 in order to remove constraints on the development of Telecom sector in the country.

(c) and (d) Although there was a fall in price of the VSNL share after the announcement of advancement of withdrawal of monopoly, the movement of share price of a company depends upon many market forces. Government has also granted a compensation package to VSNL.